



JEFFREY M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING



August 28, 2008

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Michael P. Flanagan, Chair

SUBJECT: Legislative Update

Fall Session

The State Legislature and U.S. Congress are both on recess. The Michigan House and Senate reconvene the week of September 8, 2008. They are expected to be in session for a few weeks before breaking for the general election. During that time, the Legislature is likely to work on wrapping up bills already started, as opposed to beginning work on new legislation. Overall, though, the Legislature often uses this time to address legislation that better defines their role and respective caucus positions before the November general election.

In Washington, D.C., Congress will be reconvening on September 8, 2008. Foremost on their agenda is expected to be legislation on off-shore drilling. The potential appears to be increasing for a second stimulus package that would extend unemployment benefits, enhance food stamps, target aid to local government, provide disaster relief to weather-battered regions of the country, and set up a public works construction program that very well could include schools.

At the State level, there also may be attention paid to budget companion bills for FY 09 that still need to move, supplemental appropriations for the current fiscal year (depending on revenues), and any timely issues – such as the Governor's energy package, Detroit Public Schools, or other issues that have come to the forefront in intervening weeks.

Federal Child Nutrition Reauthorization

On August 26, the Office of Grants Coordination and School Support Services held a listening session on the upcoming reauthorization of the federal Child Nutrition Act, expected to begin in the 111th Congress next year. Dr. Mike Hamm, C.S. Mott Professor of Sustainable Agriculture at Michigan State University, kicked off the two-hour meeting of stakeholders, food bank council representatives, school business officials, child care program directors, School Nutrition Association officers, and the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) Child Nutrition Program staff. The meeting also served to provide input for the development of an MDE presentation before a U.S. Department of Agriculture hearing to be held in Chicago, Illinois, on September 10 on the reauthorization.

Michigan Joint Committee on Administrative Rules - Special Education Rules

On August 13, The Legislative Joint Committee on Administrative Rules unanimously agreed to permit the Michigan Department of Education to proceed with the Extended School Year special education rules promulgation process. The Committee heard from a large number of students, parents, special education advocates, and local and intermediate school district administrators. Dr. Jacque Thompson, Director of Special Education and Early Intervention Services, led off the hearing with an overview and provided considerable contextual information during the several hour hearing.

Michigan House Subcommittee on High School Alternatives Hearing

On August 26, the House Subcommittee on High School Alternatives, chaired by Rep. Hoon-Yung Hopgood (D-Taylor), met at the Second Ebenezer Baptist Church in Detroit. Chairman Hopgood was joined at the hearing by Rep. Robert Dean (D-Grand Rapids). The committee heard testimony from parents, students, teachers, and administrators on the new high school graduation requirements. Other topics addressed by the witnesses included charter schools, alternative schools, class size reduction, school attendance areas, teacher professional development, foreign language offerings, art education, physical education, parenting skills, and school infrastructure.

The Committee's next hearing is scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on September 22, 2008 at the Muskegon Intermediate School District.